MONSIEUR TONSON,

A TALE,

RECITED BY MR. FAWCETT,

At Covent Garden Theatre.

collated & perfect. J.T.K. 1800.

WRITTEN BY J. TAYLOR, ESQ.

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A TALE.

THERE liv'd, as Fame reports, in days of yore,
At leaſt ſome fifty years ago, or more,
A pleaſant Wight on town, yclep'd TOM KING,
A fellow that was clever at a joke,
Expert in all the arts to teaze and *ſmoke*,
In ſhort, for ſtrokes of humour, quite *the thing*.

To many a jovial Club this KING was known,
With whom his active wit unrivall'd ſhone—
Choice Spirit, grave Free Maſon, Buck, and Blood,
Would crowd his Stories and *Bon Mots* to hear,
And none a diſappointment e'er could fear,
His humour flow'd in ſuch a copious flood.

To him a frolic was a high delight—
A frolick he would hunt for day and night,
Careleſs how Prudence on the ſport might frown:
If e'er a pleaſant miſchief ſprang to view,
At once o'er hedge and ditch away he flew,
Nor left the game 'till he had run it down.

One night our Hero, rambling with a friend,
Near fam'd St. Giles's chanc'd his courſe to bend,
Juſt by that ſpot the Seven Dials hight;—
'Twas ſilence all around, and clear the coaſt,
The watch, as uſual, dozing on his poſt,
And ſcarce a lamp diſplay'd a twinkling light.

Around this place there liv'd the num'rous clans,
Of honeſt, plodding, Foreign Artizans,
  Known at that time by the name of Refugees—
The rod of Perſecution from their home
Compell'd the inoffenſive race to roam,
  And here they lighted, like a ſwarm of Bees.

Well! our two friends were ſaunt'ring through the ſtreet,
In hopes ſome food for humour ſoon to meet,
  When, in a window near, a light they view;
And though a dim and melancholy ray,
It ſeem'd the prologue to ſome merry play,
  So tow'rds the gloomy dome our Hero drew.

Strait at the door he gave a thund'ring knock,
(The time we may ſuppoſe near two o'cleck)
  "I'll aſk," ſays KING, "if THOMPSON lodges here"—
"THOMPSON," cries t'other, "who the devil is he?"
"I know not," KING replies, "but want to ſee
  "What kind of animal will now appear."

After ſome time a little Frenchman came,
One hand diſplay'd a ruſhlight's trembling flame,
  The other held a thing they call *culotte;*
An old ſtrip'd woollen night-cap grac'd his head,
A tatter'd waiſtcoat o'er one ſhoulder ſpread,
  Scarce half awake, he heav'd a yawning note.

Though thus untimely rouz'd, he courteous ſmil'd,
And ſoon addreſs'd our Wag in accents mild,
  Bending his head politely to his knee—
"Pray, Sare, vat vant you, dat you come ſo late?
"I beg your pardon, Sare, to make you vait;
  "Pray, tell me, Sare, vat your commands vid me?"

" Sir," replied KING, " I merely thought to know,
" As by your houſe I chanc'd to-night to go—
" But, really, I diſturb'd your ſleep, I fear—
" I ſay, I thought that you perhaps could tell,
" Among the folks who in this ſtreet may dwell,
" If there's a Mr. THOMPSON lodges here?"

The ſhiv'ring Frenchman, though not pleas'd to find
The buſineſs of this inimportant kind,
Too ſimple to ſuſpect 'twas meant in jeer,
Shrug'd out a ſigh, that thus his reſt ſhould break,
Then, with unalter'd courteſy he ſpake—
" No, Sare, no Monſieur TONSON loges here."

Our Wag begg'd pardon, and tow'rds home he ſped,
While the poor Frenchman crawl'd again to bed;
But KING reſolv'd, not thus to drop the jeſt;
So the next night, with more of whim than grace,
Again he made a viſit to the place,
To break once more the poor old Frenchman's reſt.

He knock'd,—but waited longer than before,
No footſtep ſeem'd approaching to the door;
Our Frenchman lay in ſuch a ſleep profound—
KING, with the knocker, thunder'd then again,
Firm on his poſt determin'd to remain;
And oft, indeed, he made the door reſound.

At laſt, KING hears him o'er the paſſage creep,
Wond'ring what fiend again diſturb'd his ſleep:
The Wag ſalutes him with a civil leer;
Thus drawling out, to heighten the ſurprize,
(While the poor Frenchman rubb'd his heavy eyes)
" Is there—a Mr. THOMPSON—lodges here?"

The Frenchman faulter'd, with a kind of fright—
" Vy, Sare, I'm ſure, I tell you, Sare, laſt night—
(And here he labour'd with a ſigh ſincere)
" No Monſieur TONSON in de varld I know,
" No Monſieur TONSON here—I told you ſo;
" Indeed, Sare, dere no Monſieur TONSON here."

Some more excuſes tender'd, off KING goes,
And the old Frenchman ſought once more repoſe.
The rogue next night purſu'd his odd career—
'Twas long indeed before the man came nigh,
And then he utter'd, in a piteous cry,
" Sare, 'pon my ſoul, no Monſieur TONSON here!"

Our ſportive wight his uſual viſit paid,
And the next night came forth a prattling Maid,
Whoſe tongue, indeed, than any jack went faſter—
Anxious ſhe ſtrove his errand to enquire;
He ſaid, " 'Tis vain her pretty tongue to tire,
" He ſhould not ſtir till he had ſeen her Maſter.

The Damſel then began, in doleful ſtate,
The Frenchman's broken ſlumbers to relate,
And begg'd he'd call at proper time of day—
KING told her, ſhe muſt fetch her Maſter down,
A chaiſe was ready—he was leaving Town,
But firſt had much of deep concern to ſay.

Thus urg'd, ſhe went the ſnoring man to call,
And long indeed was ſhe oblig'd to bawl,
Ere ſhe could rouze the torpid lump of clay.
At laſt he wakes—he riſes—and he ſwears,
But ſcarcely had he totter'd down the ſtairs,
When KING attacks him in the uſual way.

The Frenchman now perceiv'd 'twas all in vain
To this tormentor mildly to complain,
And ſtrait in rage began his creſt to rear—
" Sare, vat the devil make you treat me ſo?—
" Sare, I inform you, Sare, tree nights ago,
" Got tam, I ſwear, no Monſieur TONSON here."

True as the night, KING went, and heard a ſtrife
Beween the harraſs'd Frenchman and his Wife,
Which ſhould deſcend to chaſe the fiend away:
At length to join their forces they agree,
And ſtrait impetuouſly they turn the key,
Prepar'd with mutual fury for the fray.

Our Hero, with the firmneſs of a rock,
Collected to receive the mighty ſhock,
Utt'ring the old enquiry, calmly ſtood—
The *name* of THOMPSON rais'd the ſtorm ſo high,
He deem'd it then the ſafeſt plan to fly,
With—" Well, I'll call when you're in gentler mood."

In ſhort, our Hero, with the ſame intent,
Full many a night to plague the Frenchman went—
So fond of miſchief was the wicked wit:
They threw out water—for the watch they call,
But KING, expecting, ſtill eſcapes from all—
Monſieur at laſt was forc'd his houſe to quit.

It happen'd that our Wag, about this time,
On ſome fair proſpect ſought the Eaſtern clime;
Six ling'ring years were there his tedious lot:
At length, content, amid his rip'ning ſtore,
He treads again on Britain's happy ſhore,
And his long abſence is at once forgot.

To London, with impatient hope he flies,
And the ſame night, as former freaks ariſe,
He fain muſt ſtroll, the well-known haunt to trace.
"Ah! here's the ſcene of frequent mirth," he ſaid:
"My poor old Frenchman, I ſuppoſe, is dead—
"Egad! I'll knock, and ſee who holds his place."

With rapid ſtrokes he makes the manſion roar,
And while he eager eyes the op'ning door,
Lo! who obeys the knocker's rattling peal?
Why e'en our little Frenchman, ſtrange to ſay,
He took his old abode that very day—
Capricious turn of ſportive Fortune's Wheel!

Without one thought of the relentleſs foe,
Who, fiend-like, haunted him ſo long ago,
Juſt in his former trim he now appears;
The waiſtcoat and the nightcap ſeem'd the ſame,
With ruſh-light as before, he creeping came,
And KING's deteſted voice aſtoniſh'd hears.

As if ſome hideous ſpectre ſtruck his ſight,
His ſenſes ſeem'd bewilder'd with affright;
His face, indeed, beſpoke a heart full ſore—
Then, ſtarting, he exclaim'd, in rueful ſtrain,
"Begar! here's Monſieur TONSON come again!"
Away he ran—and ne'er was heard of more.

FINIS.